

MOH in final stages on SOPs to reopen borders - Muhyiddin

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The Health Ministry (MOH) is in the final stages of preparing the standard operating procedure (SOP) to reopen the country's borders before presenting it to the cabinet for approval, said National Recovery Council (NRC) chairperson Muhyiddin Yassin.

Expressing hope that the country's borders could be opened quickly, the former prime minister said an announcement on this was expected to be made soon.

"To me, the faster it is opened, the better it is for the country's economic recovery. Don't delay. Every single day of delay will cost the country a lot. There is tremendous benefit for Malaysia to open its borders soon," he told a press conference after chairing the NRC meeting in Putrajaya today.

Muhyiddin (above) said tourism, education and healthcare travel were among the sectors badly affected by the border closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

He said Malaysia had been rather slow in reopening its borders despite being among the 10 most successful countries in vaccinating its population against Covid-19.

He said other countries like Australia had already started opening their borders although their vaccination take-up rates were still lower than Malaysia's.

Muhyiddin said although there was now a rise in Covid-19 cases and admissions to hospitals in Malaysia, the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme (NIP) and administration of the booster dose had proven effective in protecting the recipients from severe infections.

"The Omicron (variant) is a worldwide problem but in Malaysia, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin has explained that they (MOH) could manage it," he added.

Muhyiddin said that at today's meeting, NRC supported in principle the Langkawi Development Authority's proposal to enhance Langkawi's international travel bubble programme in terms of reduction of screening tests and implementation of the Langkawi-Singapore Vaccinated Travel Lane.

NRC also endorsed a proposal by the British Malaysian Chamber of Commerce on talent development, recruitment and retention in efforts to attract more

investments into the country, as it could improve the country's competitiveness and encourage public-private sector cooperation, he said.

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